



AV1 from a teacher's perspective

Victoria Butler Year 4 Class Teacher, Cassiobury Junior School, Hertfordshire

As a recently qualified teacher, when my phase leader told me I would be using a robot in my classroom to help a child access her education from home, I nearly died on the spot. A student was continuing to self-isolate at home due to medical reasons and was accessing her curriculum through this little device. My immediate response was, "This should be a topic on The Gadget Show, not in my Year 4 classroom".

Thankfully the previous class teacher had sorted out all the logistical necessities and the other students were familiar with having the AV1 in class. Nevertheless, I was still apprehensive about using it myself.

After the first hour of teaching with the AV1, my mind was put at ease. I taught my class as normal whilst the AV1 would occasionally flash white, signalling that my student at home on the other end of the AV1 had a question. I could speak to her directly through the AV1, which made things a lot easier, and I uploaded resources on Google Classroom for her to print at home. Other than that, my day carried on as normal.

At the start of the term, I was nervous about forgetting to include the AV1 in group work so I made notes on my lesson plans to prompt me. I no longer need to do that as it is now second nature to pair the AV1 with a group of children. We found that conversations through the AV1 were clearer in a quieter space. We are fortunate to have a side room and a cloakroom area outside the classroom where we have set up some tables to make group work communication easier.

Now all my initial worries and hesitations have been cast aside, I have been able to think more creatively about how to adapt my teaching practice to suit both my learners in the classroom and my student at home. I have learnt how to fully involve the student at home by using AV1 alongside other online learning platforms such as Google Jamboard for collaborative mind-map and Kahoot for team quizzes. The student can also show colour signals on the AV1 for true or false questions or send her answers live to my chromebook in class.

We - myself, my TA and the class - are very excited as this student begins her phased return to school. This transition back to being physically in the building has been made much easier, for all involved, due to the relationships that have been made or maintained through using the AV1. I feel I know her well; her likes, dislikes, sense of humour and abilities - all thanks to the AV1. Similarly, she is comfortable to be coming back because she knows me, my teaching style and personality, as well as maintained relationships with her peers. What could have been an incredibly overwhelming, daunting and worrying time has become one of reunion and excitement.